United Nations A/55/43 (Part II)*

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 January 2001

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for Follow-up to the World Summit for Children on its first substantive session**

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children", decided to establish an open-ended preparatory committee to prepare for the outcome of the special session.

2. The General Assembly further requested the preparatory committee to convene one organizational session on 7 and 8 February 2000 and one substantive session from 30 May to 2 June 2000 and to propose to the Assembly its requirements for further meetings in 2001.

II. Organizational matters

A. Opening and duration of the first substantive session

3. The Preparatory Committee held its first substantive session at United Nations Headquarters from 30 May to 2 June 2000. In the course of its session, the Preparatory Committee held five plenary meetings and two meetings for panel discussions. The Committee also held meetings for informal consultations.

4. In carrying out the mandate entrusted to it, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) acted as the substantive secretariat while the Disarmament and Decolonization Organs Servicing Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services served as technical secretariat of the Preparatory Committee.

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

** The present document contains the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first substantive session. The report on the organizational session has been issued separately in document A/55/43 (Part I). The final report will be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 43* (A/55/43/Rev.1).

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5. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, who also made an introductory statement.

6. The Executive Director of UNICEF also made a statement.

B. Officers

7. At the first substantive session, the composition of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee remained the same as for its organizational session:

Chairman:
Patricia **Durrant** (Jamaica)

Vice-Chairmen:
Madina Ly **Tall** (Mali)
Anwarul Karim **Chowdhury** (Bangladesh)
Lidija **Topic** (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Hanns **Schumacher** (Germany)

C. Adoption of the agenda

8. At its 1st meeting, on 30 May, the Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda for the first substantive session, contained in document A/AC.256/4, as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Introduction of the report of the Secretary-General.
5. Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session:
   (a) Date and duration of further substantive sessions;
   (b) Provisional agenda for the second substantive session;
   (c) Participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session.
6. Consideration of proposed outline of the outcome of the special session: identification of key issues and trends.
7. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first substantive session.
8. Other matters.

D. Documentation

9. The Preparatory Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for Follow-up to the World Summit for Children on its organizational session (A/55/43 (Part I));

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century (A/AC.256/3-E/ICEF/2000/13);

(c) Provisional agenda (A/AC.256/4 and Add.1);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the update on the preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children (A/AC.256/5);

(e) President's summary of the debate on the document entitled "Emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century" (A/AC.256/3-E/ICEF/2000/13) held at the annual session of the Executive Board of UNICEF (A/AC.256/6);

(f) Draft programme of work (A/AC.256/CRP.1);

(g) Note by the Secretariat on arrangements for accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations (A/AC.256/CRP.2);

(h) Draft provisional agenda for the second substantive session (A/AC.256/CRP.3);

(i) Provisional programme of work for the second substantive session (A/AC.256/CRP.4).

III. Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session

10. The Preparatory Committee considered agenda items 4, 5 and 6 at its 1st to 4th meetings, from 30 May to 1 June 2000. Statements were made by a number of delegations, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. In that regard, various proposals were put forward. The Chairperson's summary of the debate regarding emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century is contained in annex I to the present report.

11. At the 1st meeting, on 30 May, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF introduced the report of the Secretary-General on emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century (A/AC.256/3-E/ICEF/2000/13).

12. At its 3rd meeting, on 1 June, the Preparatory Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.256/L.2) on the participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process (see para. 25, decision 4).

13. In accordance with decision 1 adopted at its organizational session, the Preparatory Committee held three panel discussions, on 30 and 31 May. The summaries of the panel discussions by the respective Chairpersons are contained in annexes II to IV to the present report.

A. Date and duration of further substantive sessions

14. At its 4th meeting, on 1 June, the Preparatory Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.256/L.3) on substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee in 2001 (see para. 25, decision 5).

15. Also at the 4th meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.256/L.4) on dates of the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children (see para. 25, decision 6).

B. Provisional agenda for the second substantive session

16. At its 4th meeting, on 1 June, the Preparatory Committee adopted the provisional agenda for the second substantive session (A/AC.256/CRP.3), as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session.
5. Consideration of the outcome of the special session.
6. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session.
7. Other matters.

17. Also at its 4th meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the provisional programme of work for the second substantive session (A/AC.256/CRP.4), as orally amended, as follows:

Provisional programme of work for the second substantive session

Date/time	
29 January-2 February 2001	
Monday, 29 January	
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	**Opening of the session (item 1)**
	Adoption of the agenda (item 2)
	Organization of work (item 3)
	Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session (item 4):
	Update on preparations
	Update on reviews and appraisals
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	**Update on reviews and appraisals (item 4)**
Tuesday, 30 January	
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	**Update on reviews and appraisals (item 4)**

Date/time	
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	Update on reviews and appraisals (item 4)
Wednesday, 31 January	
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Consideration of the outcome of the special session (item 5):
	Introduction of the draft outcome of the special session
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	Discussions on the draft outcome of the special session (item 5)
Thursday, 1 February	
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Discussions on the draft outcome of the special session (item 5)
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	Informal consultations
Friday, 2 February	
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session (item 4)
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	Action on proposals (including provisional agenda for the third substantive session)
	Adoption of the report on the second substantive session (item 6)
	Other matters (item 7)
	Closure

C. Participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session

18. At its 4th meeting, on 1 June, the Preparatory Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.256/L.5/Rev.1) on arrangements for accreditation of non-governmental organizations in the special session, as orally amended (see para. 25, decision 7).

19. At its 5th meeting, on 2 June, the Preparatory Committee had before it a draft decision (A/AC.256/L.7) on the arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session of the General Assembly on children. The Committee decided to defer its decision on the question to its second substantive session (see para. 25, decision 8).

D. Participation of associate members of regional commissions

20. At its 4th meeting, on 1 June, the Preparatory Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.256/L.6/Rev.1) on the participation of associate members of regional commissions, as orally amended (see para. 25, decision 9).

IV. Consideration of the proposed outline of the outcome of the special session: identification of key issues and trends

21. The Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 6 at its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 1 June 2000. Statements and suggestions were made by many delegations.

22. At its 4th meeting, on 1 June, based on the agreement reached in informal consultations, the Preparatory Committee agreed to authorize its Bureau, with the support of the substantive secretariat, to prepare a draft outcome document, taking into account the views expressed during the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, for consideration at the second substantive session in the first instance. It was proposed that the document in its first draft would be made available to Member States in November 2000.

V. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first substantive session

23. At its 5th meeting, on 2 June 2000, the Preparatory Committee took note of the summaries by the Chairpersons at its first substantive session (see annexes II-IV).

24. Also at the 5th meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft report on its first substantive session (A/AC.256/L.8), as orally revised by its Rapporteur.

VI. Decisions

25. At its first substantive session, the Preparatory Committee adopted the following decisions:

Decision 4
Participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process

The Preparatory Committee, recalling paragraph (b) of its decision 2 of 8 February 2000,[1] by which other non-governmental organizations that were not accredited either to the Economic and Social Council or to UNICEF but that had a collaborative relationship and partnership with UNICEF pursuant to its mandate to obtain from non-governmental organizations having a special interest in child and family welfare the advice and technical assistance which it may require for the implementation of its programmes[2] would also be invited to participate in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee. A list of those non-governmental organizations was to be provided to the Preparatory Committee by 31 March 2000. The non-governmental organizations on the list were to be approved by the Preparatory Committee on a no-objection basis by 30 April 2000, and acknowledging that several suggestions for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process of the special session were received after

[1] See A/55/43 (Part I).

[2] General Assembly resolution 417 (V).

the deadline established by the above-mentioned decision, namely, 31 March 2000, decides to extend the deadline for the approval on a no-objection basis of participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process of the special session as follows:

(a) A list of additional non-governmental organizations proposed for participation should be provided to the Preparatory Committee by 30 September 2000;

(b) The non-governmental organizations on that list will be approved by the Preparatory Committee on a no-objection basis by 31 October 2000.

Decision 5
Substative sessions of the Preparatory Committee in 2001

The Preparatory Committee, recalling paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, by which the Preparatory Committee was requested to propose to the General Assembly its requirements for further meetings in 2001, decides to propose to the General Assembly that two substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee be convened in New York during 2001, one from 29 January to 2 February and one from 11 to 15 June.

Decision 6
Dates of the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children

The Preparatory Committee, recalling paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, by which the Assembly decided that the special session shall be convened in the month of September 2001, recalling also paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 54/93, by which the Assembly established the Preparatory Committee to address organizational issues and to prepare for the outcome of the special session, decides to propose to the General Assembly that the special session be convened in New York for three days between the first and second weeks of the general debate of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Decision 7
Arrangements for accreditation of non-governmental organizations in the special session

The Preparatory Committee, recalling paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, decides that the arrangements for accreditation of non-governmental organizations in the special session will be as follows:

(a) The following non-governmental organizations will be invited to participate in the special session:

(i) The non-governmental organizations which enjoy consultative status in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996 or are accredited to UNICEF;

(ii) Other non-governmental organizations accredited to the preparatory process of the special session in accordance with relevant decisions of the Preparatory Committee;

(b) These arrangements shall in no way create a precedent for other special sessions.

Decision 8
Arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session of the General Assembly on children

The Preparatory Committee decides to defer to its second substantive session its decision on arrangements regarding the participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session of the General Assembly on children.

Decision 9
Participation of associate members of regional commissions

The Preparatory Committee, recalling paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, in which the Assembly, inter alia, invited regional and subregional organizations to undertake reviews of progress achieved since the World Summit for Children, and encouraged regional preparatory activities for the special session on children, decides to recommend to the General Assembly that it invite associate members of regional commissions to participate in the special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children and in its preparatory process, subject to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, in the same capacity of observers that applied to recent special sessions of the General Assembly.

Annex I

Summary by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee on the debate regarding emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century

1. On 30 and 31 May and 1 June 2000, the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for Follow-up to the World Summit for Children discussed the report of the Secretary-General on emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century (A/AC.256/3-E/ICEF/2000/13). A summary by the President of the Executive Board of UNICEF on the debate held on this document at the annual session of the Board was also presented (A/AC.256/6).

2. The meeting concluded that the report provided a stimulating analysis of the 1990s global context and the progress towards achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. It justly identified deepening poverty and inequality, proliferating conflict, the deadly spread of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and continuing discrimination, particularly against women and girls, as formidable challenges in developing future actions for children. The integrated approach to the rights and well-being of children and adolescents based on the life cycle provides a useful conceptual framework. The three key outcome areas for children — that all children should have a good start at life; that they should have an opportunity to complete a good-quality education; and that adolescents should have opportunities to fully develop their individual capacities — capture the issues of fundamental importance.

3. The next stage of the process is to define specific areas of action, establish milestone targets and agree on the indicators to assess progress in the future. As part of this process it was recommended that thematic consultations involving experts in the various fields be held to determine how to shape the operational strategies that will achieve practical and measurable outcomes for children throughout their life cycle. These recommendations will form the basis of the agenda for the future that will be adopted at the special session.

4. Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, Bretton Woods institutions and civil society organizations (including unions, the private sector, mass media and universities) should all be actively involved in identifying the most effective ways to achieve sustainable social outcomes for children.

5. The goals adopted at the World Summit need to be updated and the achievements that have already been made must be sustained. However, the major new challenges detailed in the report of the Secretary-General need to be addressed to ensure that there are no setbacks. Committed leadership at all levels, particularly at the highest level, is essential if the rights of children are to be fully realized.

6. The principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should underpin all future action for children. The rights of all children — in particular those marginalized by poverty, gender or other forms of discrimination (e.g., indigenous children, children in remote areas and children with disabilities) — should be given priority attention. While significant gains have been made in legal reform, the gap between children's legal rights and their rights in practice must be closed. To ensure

this, appropriate policy, budget and institutional reforms should be instituted in all countries.

7. Globalization is a challenge that deserves a more in-depth analysis. It has had profound exclusionary and negative consequences on children, to the point where in some instances, such as trafficking and sexual exploitation, children have themselves become commodities. Yet globalization has also strengthened international cooperation and accelerated economic growth and social development in many instances. Its dynamism and reach must be harnessed to promote children's rights. Information and communication technology should be made available to developing countries to help improve the quality and efficiency of the provision of basic social services.

8. The vision of breaking the cycle of poverty in one generation received strong endorsement. Universal access to basic social services is a key component of the fight against poverty. More resources are needed and the resources available must be better utilized to fight poverty and to provide access to basic services for all. Official development assistance must be accelerated to reach the agreed United Nations target. Other measures, such as a significant reduction in external debt and the need to focus aid flows on the neediest countries and the neediest people, as well as on countries suffering economic crises, must be part of the international action in favour of children.

9. Child protection issues should be given greater attention in the future. Special efforts are needed to protect the rights of child labourers and child prisoners; children affected by drug abuse; children, especially girls, affected by sexual and emotional abuse; children with disabilities; children affected by armed conflict; children who are traumatized, displaced or who are refugees; and child victims of genital mutilation. The adoption of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography was welcomed in this regard. An agreement for the simultaneous demolition of all landmines was proposed.

10. Participation, along with non-discrimination and the best interests of the child, are overarching principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that should guide the setting of future goals and strategies. Child and adolescent participation does not mean challenging the legitimate role of children and adults in the community, but rather developing a culture of respect for children's views. Adults should play an active role in facilitating child and adolescent participation, by actively listening to them and recognizing the value of their opinions.

11. A special event or forum on the rights of the child, to be held in conjunction with the special session and involving the broad participation of children and adolescents, civil society and the private sector, should be given serious consideration.

12. The important link between women's and children's rights and well-being was emphasized. Other international human rights treaties, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, should be used to guide future actions for children. Parenting education was encouraged not just for mothers, but also for fathers, who should be active in child-rearing.

13. Education, with an emphasis on girls' education, quality and achievement, is the key to future human development. Access to basic health services, clean water, safe sanitation and proper nutrition must remain priorities.

14. While the HIV/AIDS pandemic is dramatic, emphasis should be maintained and increased on other diseases that take a high toll on children, like tuberculosis, pneumonia, measles, diphtheria and malaria. There is a need to formulate and promote child-oriented policies, strategies and programmes to prevent and combat HIV/AIDS. Adolescents should have full access to information on responsible sexual behaviour and equitable gender roles and to reproductive and sexual health services.

15. The future agenda for children to be adopted at the special session of the General Assembly should be innovative, concise and action-oriented. It should be broad enough to address the concerns of children in all parts of the world, in both developing and industrialized countries, while prioritizing key actions that will make a major difference to the most disadvantaged children.

Annex II

Panel discussion I. Review and assessment, including constraints encountered in implementing the goals of the World Summit for Children

Summary by the Chairperson, Madina Ly Tall (Mali)

1. On 30 May 2000, the Preparatory Committee held a panel discussion on the implementation of the goals of the World Summit for Children, comprising a review and assessment of progress made and lessons learned; an examination of constraints encountered; and proposals for the future. Five eminent panellists addressed the Committee, and their presentations were then supplemented by comments from delegations. The session reflected on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, and on 10 years of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was designed to stimulate reflection and discussions.

2. The discussion revealed successes and shortfalls, both within and between countries and regions. Delegations called for preparations for the special session to be an honest, self-critical appraisal of this experience.

3. The acceleration of positive change in the past 10 years reflects the powerful combined effect of the Summit and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which rapidly achieved near-universal ratification. Children are higher on public and political agendas than ever before. Following the Summit, 155 countries developed national plans of action and many adopted legislation, policies and programmes to address the provisions of the Convention.

4. More than any other international conference of the 1990s, progress on follow-up to the Summit has been comprehensively monitored, using specially developed indicators; promoting data collection and analysis; strengthening national capacity; and enhancing technical and operational collaboration between UNICEF and other United Nations, international, academic and non-governmental organizations. Annual reviews and reports have been produced, and a major review was conducted at mid-decade. The Summit has successfully demonstrated the unique potential of the United Nations to provide global leadership and focus, as well as the importance of identifying a clear focal point for follow-up, which in the case of the World Summit for Children has been UNICEF.

5. Areas in which major progress has been achieved include perinatal mortality, immunization (including 85 per cent measles coverage and the near-complete eradication of polio), the promotion of oral rehydration, and the use of micronutrients (including iodized salt and vitamin A). At the same time, the remarkable success of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in promoting and monitoring effective implementation has contributed to an increasing awareness of children's rights and commitment to their fulfilment. This process has led to the establishment of new international standards, including the International Labour Organization Convention to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Statute of the International Criminal Court and, most recently, the approval of two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6. Political commitment and leadership, including at the local level (e.g., the Mayors' Initiative in France), have been among the most important determinants of success.

7. Major challenges encountered during the decade include armed conflict, political instability, the burgeoning HIV/AIDS pandemic, social exclusion, discrimination and disparity, poverty, debt and failure to provide adequate levels of development assistance. Children have been most affected by these challenges, as well as by traditional attitudes under which their status as bearers of rights is undermined.

8. As a result of these and other factors, there continue to be major challenges in such areas as maternal mortality, education (particularly girls' education), water supply and sanitation. Even in regard to such areas as immunization, where overall progress has been good, many children remain unreached as a result of persistent discrimination and other forms of exclusion.

9. There are, furthermore, a number of important areas in relation to which no quantifiable targets were set in the formulation of the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action. The right to participation was not addressed, and a category of "child protection" or "children in especially difficult circumstances" was insufficiently specified. Major challenges in these areas include: juvenile justice systems that are not in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and, all too often, fail to recognize children as victims; neglect of the rights of refugee children; use of children in armed conflicts; the effects of landmines; exploitation of children through labour, sexual abuse, sale and trafficking; and limited action to prevent drug abuse.

10. There is a need for better-formulated benchmarks in all areas, addressing the situation of all children. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the long-term aim must envisage 100 per cent coverage. Possible examples include the eradication of all forms of violence against children, including the use of corporal punishment, and the establishment of systems to enable the registration of all births.

11. The processes of follow-up to the World Summit for Children and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been complementary: the time has now come to establish targets and strategies for a future agenda that will allow the two to unite in a mutually reinforcing way.

12. Recognizing children as bearers of rights will, at the same time, require priority to be given transparency and accountability, including through the further strengthening of indicators of children's rights, data collection and reporting. In countries where these do not already exist, mechanisms to assess the impact on children of existing or proposed policies, legislation or changes in administrative procedures should be considered, as should the establishment of independent monitoring mechanisms that focus on the rights of children. Continuing emphasis on legal and policy reforms must be accompanied by the allocation of the resources necessary to ensure their effective implementation. Measures such as these can play a major role in creating an enabling environment for the fulfilment of children's rights.

13. The challenge today is not only to determine what needs to be done and who will do it, but also how resources are to be made available for children. This includes finding ways of ensuring the sustainability of progress achieved in the past

10 years, taking into account the context of ever-growing populations, by identifying positive experiences and using them to inform the establishment of overall development frameworks.

14. Planning will require consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations and children. Similarly, mobilization of the resources necessary to implement these plans will need to go beyond financing and include consideration of new ways of enabling and organizing people to achieve progress, as well as the development of new partnerships — including mobilizing the private sector to care for the rights of children. In this connection, the United Nations may act as both a catalyst and a guardian of international norms.

15. New information and technologies, including those driving the communications revolution, present opportunities to be grasped. Furthermore, consideration is needed as to why existing knowledge and mechanisms are not more effectively used. At the same time, however, lack of knowledge must not be allowed to become an excuse for inaction.

16. Both the United Nations and Member States can play a vital role in helping to ensure attention to children's rights in appropriate international forums including the five-year follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, as well as the forthcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

17. There is a need to rekindle the spirit of the World Summit for Children, a spirit which involves the recognition of both national and international responsibilities and a commitment to joint efforts to meet those responsibilities. Increased development assistance will need to be matched by ever-greater efforts on the part of recipient Governments to improve their management of resources and to prioritize allocations for children. Governments may wish to consider adjustments to national priorities by, for example, shifting resources from military expenditure to expenditure on social services, or by broadening child-oriented policies and provisions to enable more widespread provision of pre-school or after-school programmes in urban areas. Poverty-reduction programmes could be encouraged and supported by providing interest-free loans, or loans at reduced rates.

18. It was impossible to predict in 1990 what would emerge as the major factors affecting follow-up to the World Summit for Children. The same is true today, hence the need for an agenda that is broad and compelling, but that retains flexibility. Completing the unfinished business of the Summit will be one essential part of that agenda. In some areas, what is needed is well known: for example, in order to address the issue of maternal mortality, measures are needed to ensure that a trained health worker can attend every birth, and that such provisions are made as part of broader efforts to strengthen health systems.

19. Education is essential to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and to integrate those excluded from recent progress. Access to school can help prevent discrimination and early marriage. Promotion of free compulsory education of good quality, bolstered by efforts to create cultural values that reject all forms of child labour, is also one of the most effective ways of bringing an end to a form of exploitation that blights the lives of some 250 million children under the age of 15. Schools must strengthen partnerships with families and communities, especially as

part of the effort to combat disparities and to develop appropriate school curricula as an important contribution to increased public awareness of children's rights.

20. When given the opportunity, children and young people have amply demonstrated their potential to contribute, as good citizens, to the development of tolerant, peaceful and democratic societies. More programmes are needed for adolescents who have an important role to play in overcoming the challenges that face them, including through participation in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such programmes. An important start can be made by including children and young people as more prominent actors in the present preparatory process and in the special session itself.

Annex III

Panel discussion II. (a) Emerging issues

Summary by the Chairperson, Hanns Schumacher (Germany)

1. On 31 May 2000, the Preparatory Committee held a panel discussion on emerging issues. Four eminent panellists addressed the Committee, and their presentations were supplemented by comments from delegations. The session dealt with four major issues: the impact of armed conflict on children; the impact of HIV/AIDS on child survival and development; poverty, debt, official development assistance (ODA), disparities and discrimination; and HIV/AIDS, youth and civil society participation.

2. Common threads in all the presentations were: the recognition that we now have a window of opportunity which will allow us to safeguard children's rights, and which must be utilized; and the recognition of the importance of ensuring meaningful participation of children, especially adolescents.

Impact of armed conflict on children

3. The sheer scope of the problem of children in armed conflict, and the need for a distinct response, call for special treatment to be given to the topic. The recognition of child protection as part of the peace and security agenda has built momentum and created opportunity for further action.

4. The speaker called for a number of actions, using this window of opportunity, including:

(a) Responding to the special needs of the girl child, stressing that girls are especially vulnerable in situations of armed conflict;

(b) Stopping the recruitment of child soldiers, utilizing the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child now in place;

(c) Supporting education in conflict situations;

(d) Assisting internally displaced persons (approximately 30 million worldwide, 60 per cent of whom are children);

(e) Involving young people in all countries in advocating for peace;

(f) Building strong partnerships with civil society organizations and supporting national capacity-building among non-governmental organizations.

Impact of HIV/AIDS on child survival and development

5. The presentation of HIV/AIDS focused on the challenges the international community faces. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has created much suffering and has resulted in the non-achievement of many goals, becoming a socio-economic and security issue, rather than simply a disease.

6. HIV/AIDS has a profound effect on children, as it spreads fastest among people under 24. It particularly affects women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa, where more women and girls are affected than at the global level. Women and young

girls are more severely impacted by AIDS. In countries in conflict, they are often victims of sexual violence.

7. The impact on child survival is of great concern because, inter alia, of the following:

(a) Life expectancy for a child born between 2000 and 2002 in sub-Saharan Africa is now reduced to 42 from 60 years, largely owing to HIV/AIDS. Under-five mortality is increasing, sometimes dramatically, with the result that the goal of extending life expectancy cannot be met;

(b) As HIV prevalence is on the increase, so is the number of AIDS orphans;

(c) The impact on education is equally worrisome, as children, especially girls, are taken out of school to become caregivers;

(d) Discrimination is an added burden, owing to the stigma attached to AIDS;

(e) There is an increase in child-headed households, with severe implications for child welfare, nutrition, health and child labour. We are witnessing the erosion of the vary fabric of society;

(f) Children in armed conflict suffer the extra burden of HIV/AIDS.

8. There is currently a window of opportunity to respond to the HIV/AIDS issue: political, civic and religious leaders are speaking out, and more resources are being allocated to fight the disease. There are more programmatic opportunities to prevent transmission, as in the case of mother-to-child transmission. While the response is not yet commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, some progress has been made, e.g., in Brazil, Thailand and Uganda, where infection rates have begun to decrease.

9. We still need specific actions, including:

(a) More attention to AIDS orphans;

(b) A stronger focus on the girl child and most vulnerable children, such as street children;

(c) Actions to prevent mother-to-child transmission;

(d) An agenda to respond to the problems of children in armed conflict.

Poverty and disparities

10. The speaker stated that economics tends to be a child-blind discipline, in that children are often invisible in economic decision-making. Yet, macroeconomic policies have a real impact on children. Damaging monetary policies, for instance, can play havoc with the well-being of children. A central bank can cause more harm to children than an incompetent ministry of education. While it is good to invest in the social sectors, if these investments are implemented in a child-blind, macroeconomic environment they will not yield the expected benefits. Economic policies are seldom child-neutral.

11. Economic analysis shows that investment in children gives a high rate of return. All spending on children should be seen as investment, not as consumption. There is no contradiction between the rights approach and the economic approach:

supporting the most vulnerable is also economically sound. Prevention is better and more cost-effective than the cure. Investing in children is the best way to break the poverty cycle.

12. The principles of a child-friendly macroeconomic strategy should:

(a) Emphasize equity and reduction of disparity;

(b) Encourage stability and predictability in the macroeconomic environment;

(c) Consider the role of human and social capital, and stem the erosion of social cohesion;

(d) Encourage job creation to increase the income and self-esteem of parents;

(e) Promote external debt reduction strategies that are conducive to protecting the well-being of children;

(f) Focus on the long-term perspective.

HIV/AIDS, youth and civil society participation

13. The speaker stressed that all children must have parents who listen to them and agree on what to do through dialogue. It is the best form of education and empowerment. Children and young people are essential partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS, as evidenced by the children of Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, who have been taking it upon themselves to inform and protect their brothers and sisters.

14. Children are not just our future but the present as well. They should be seen as part of the solution, not the problem.

15. In the discussion that followed the presentations, it was agreed that the issues highlighted by the panellists were appropriate themes for the special session of the General Assembly in 2001.

16. Delegations noted that poverty is still at the core of non-achievement and lack of sustainability of certain goals. Solutions should be of a long-term nature, rather than simply reacting to emergencies. Information, dialogue and training are needed to better understand the issue of social exclusion and to promote inclusion.

17. It was stressed that one of the objectives of education should be to create a culture in society that respects the rights of children. Legal approaches are also needed for the protection of children's rights. Better laws need to be developed to encourage child participation.

18. The needs and rights of young girls, especially those who have been victimized by early marriage, rape and prostitution, have come to the fore. It was stressed that institutional frameworks need to be developed and strengthened at the national and local levels to deal with this issue.

19. It was noted that globalization has both a positive and a negative impact on communities. Good traditional practices for child development should not be lost, and strategies should be developed to help communities and families mitigate the negative impact of globalization.

20. Comprehensive approaches are needed to tackle HIV/AIDS and must cover minors, people crossing borders and child labourers. We must recognize that young

people are sexually active and, therefore, the best approach to HIV/AIDS reduction is to increase training in life skills, leading to more responsible sexual behaviour. While there are no simple answers to why some countries are able to achieve success in reducing HIV/AIDS while others are not, political leadership, openness to sexuality issues, emphasis on preventive care, and a focus on the most vulnerable and on community mobilization were identified as important ingredients for success.

21. Delegations called for:

(a) Better laws affecting children, and the creation of a culture of child rights and a culture of participation;

(b) The inclusion of children and youth in planning and implementation of programmes benefiting them;

(c) Ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child by all Governments, and adoption of national legislation concerning the recruitment of children as soldiers;

(d) More frequent and better reporting mechanisms of child abuse, and stronger censure measures against those abusing the rights of children;

(e) Replicating successful initiatives to protect children affected by war at the community level;

(f) Making education an essential component of humanitarian assistance;

(g) Including information on the security of children in all documents prepared for the Security Council;

(h) Ensuring that private sector company policies are child-friendly;

(i) Recognizing "children in cities" as an emerging issue, including the breakdown of all traditional patterns of education;

(j) Sharing lessons learned from the experience of countries that have succeeded in halting the spread of AIDS, such as Uganda and Thailand;

(k) Concentrating on youth in HIV/AIDS prevention;

(l) Designing implementation strategies that build on what has already been achieved;

(m) Encouraging holistic, sustainable health programmes (e.g., the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization);

(n) Ensuring universal birth registration.

Annex IV

Panel Discussion II. (b) Future Action for Children

Summary by the Chairperson, Anwarul K. Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

1. On 31 May 2000, the Preparatory Committee held a panel discussion on the future actions the world community must take in order to fulfil the rights and ensure the well-being of children. Three panellists addressed the Committee, and several delegations made additional comments. The session explored what needs to be done at critical times of the life cycle — in early childhood, throughout the period of basic education and during adolescence — in order to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion and prepare children for the challenging adulthood they will face in the new century.

Early childhood development

2. Realizing the full potential of children demands that the world community pay much greater attention to the first years of life. There is new scientific evidence and practical experience to support this statement: on the impact of health and nutritional status (such as iodine deficiency) and early stimulation on the development of the brain; on the importance of early socialization patterns and the quality of the child's immediate environment; and on the critical influence these determinants have on later physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Gender socialization of both girls and boys early in life, towards values of equality, mutual respect and non-violence, is an important example of how early experiences can influence later action.

3. Key interventions on behalf of young children must therefore go beyond survival. While the health and nutrition of young children will continue to be a priority, their psychosocial and emotional development — especially for those in families in crisis — must be given increased importance. Fulfilling all of these needs requires support, guidance, education and counselling — as well as resources — for parents and other caregivers. Knowledge and skills about the multiple needs of young children must be provided to parents, a particular emphasis should be given to the father's role and more comprehensive social services to meet these needs must be available. This should include the registration of all children at birth.

4. The benefits of more attention to early childhood are both great and increasingly obvious. They include greater school success for children and economic productivity for adults, lower social sector expenditures, and the reduction of inequalities based on economic status and gender. It is only logical, therefore, that both families and Governments, and the world community which supports them, must invest greater resources in the young child — where the opportunity to influence later development, of individuals and of societies, is greatest, especially to reach the poor, marginalized and excluded children. Child-focused data would be important to cover the risk of discrimination.

Basic education

5. Basic education of good quality, as both a right and the major preoccupation of children in "middle childhood", is a further important determinant of what happens to children in adolescence and adulthood. Building on experiences of early childhood, it lays the foundation for future learning and employment, and therefore must also be given priority by families and communities, countries and the international community. The role of education in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty, especially that of women, must be enhanced. Countries must be encouraged to develop their own analyses and long-term plans for achieving education for all children, with the involvement of all stakeholders, in a democratic and transparent way. Such plans, with adequate budgets derived from many different partners, must emphasize quality as well as access, and must give special attention to children excluded from school and from learning. There should be a strong monitoring mechanism for school performance as related to what is happening in the classroom situation.

6. Schools must be seen not only as educational institutions that help children learn what they need to learn, but also as vehicles for protecting children and realizing their rights. In doing so, they should reach out to the excluded and be democratic and participatory, compassionate and non-violent — with child-friendliness being the basic value reflected in the school environment. Such schools — and other environments for children — must lead to their greater support, strengthening their individual capacity to act and helping them to develop the broadest possible range of choices in the future. School should be the focal point of the society. Basic social services must accordingly be ensured.

7. Building on the process of early childhood development, the early years of primary school are especially critical — for basic learning and socialization (especially in regard to gender) and for the early identification of patterns of systemic discrimination and exclusion and of individual disability.

8. Gender equality is an especially important goal of education — in classrooms and schools, as well as in the education system as a whole. Girls may require special programmes and approaches to enter and stay in school, but the education they receive must be of equal quality and an integral part of a unified national system. Given the pivotal role schools play in society, gender sensitivity and equality in education can have a large impact on other actors in the community.

Adolescence

9. The challenges facing the adolescents of today are daunting — family violence and social conflict, early parenting, sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, drug abuse and despair leading to suicide. It is important in a world facing these challenges to insist that the lifestyles underlying them cannot be ignored or accepted as inevitable, and that they can be developed and changed. Adolescents, on the cusp of adulthood and full responsibility as citizens and social actors, can no longer be neglected.

10. To achieve this, the process must start from the early years, within families, communities and schools, to be able to prevent rather than simply cure, with strong caring environments and the development of healthy values and behaviour. Open discourse with young people and their full participation in issues of concern to them

are essential, as is a focus on healthy lifestyles. Universal norms for adolescent behaviour and habits, for responsibilities as well as rights, must be identified and firmly grounded in specific cultural patterns.

11. The issues of adolescents as sexual beings, and of sexuality generally, so densely intertwined with gender, must be addressed clearly, with lifelong education focusing not only on knowledge and behaviour but also on the nature of personal identity, relationships and intimacy. In this context, the rights, well-being and special needs of adolescent girls are fundamental. The media, so influential with adolescents and in the development of their sense of self, must also be used to protect children — and adolescents must be able to more critically interpret media messages. The school curriculum should cater to the upcoming needs of adolescents for their enabling capacity to make choices.

Cross-cutting issues and themes

12. A number of critical issues and themes, cutting across the stages of the life cycle, arose in the presentations, from the comments of delegations, and in the President's closing summary. These include the following:

(a) The rights of children must be the paramount focus of international and national efforts in the new century. This focus leads naturally to a principal concern for eliminating all forms of discrimination and exclusion. All social programmes, for example, can be designed from the point of view of the excluded, based on careful analyses of who the excluded are and why they are excluded, and more fully embedded in larger macroeconomic analyses and in programmes to eradicate poverty. All Governments must be held accountable for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(b) Individual stages of the life cycle cannot be seen in isolation; one influences the next, in a never-ending process. Only through urgent and coordinated action at all stages can the inter-generational nature of poverty and exclusion be addressed;

(c) Actions for children must derive from the outcomes desired for them, from birth through adolescence. They must be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent, able to learn and to continue learning throughout life, and to participate in decisions which affect their future. Children must be free from conditions of violence and conflict, labour and exploitation, discrimination and exclusion;

(d) Parents and caregivers of children of all ages, men as well as women — especially those in conditions of crisis — must be supported by communities and social services so that they have the knowledge, skills and resources needed to care for children;

(e) Environments in which children are raised — private as well as public — must be democratic, enabling, non-violent and supportive of the rights of children;

(f) Services provided to children and their families must be both accessible and of high quality — friendly, protective, inclusive and gender-sensitive;

(g) Countries must establish effective, accountable and forceful mechanisms, at both national and local levels, in order to ensure the prioritization of, and a

holistic approach to, children's rights and well-being — across the international conventions which they have signed;

(h) New information and communication technologies, as well as the media, must be harnessed to better contribute to human development, to the reduction of disparities and to improvements in the lives of children;

(i) Non-governmental organizations and the wider civil society have a critical role to play in this process, especially in innovations and in cooperation with Governments, to act in the uphill struggle to fulfil the rights of children;

(j) The focus on new challenges must be complemented by a concern for the unfinished business of the World Summit for Children. Its goals must be fully integrated into future actions for children; so, too, must the goals and strategies of the international conferences being held in 2000, beginning with the World Education Forum in Dakar, be integrated;

(k) A secondary support programme should be explored for children vulnerable to child labour;

(l) Future action should be built and structured on lessons learned in the past. Actions may make reference to the President's summary of the discussion on emerging issues for children in the twenty-first century during the annual session of the UNICEF Executive Board;

(m) Special measures must also be taken to protect children from armed conflict and from becoming child soldiers;

(n) It is important to carefully review the unfinished goals of the World Summit for Children, with a view to updating, refining and sharpening the future actions, bearing in mind the complex global scenario.